

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been objected to in that at line 1, the word "object" should be plural and an appropriate amendment has been made. Claims 1-15 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Again, appropriate amendments have been made. More specifically, the phrase "such as" has been deleted so that the claim preamble now reads "A portable, light-weight, foldable, support device adapted to support lightweight objects including papers and bingo cards ..." This Amendment also reflects that the supported objects are not a part of the claimed combination.

Appropriate amendments have also been made to the body of claim 1 to more clearly recite which of the several panels is being referred to. Thus, it is believed that the present amendments to claim 1 obviate all of the formal objections raised in the Official Action.

Concerning the rejection on the merits, claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 11-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patents 6,305,652 to Borke et al. (Borke) in view of U.S. Patent 4,948,039 to Amatangelo. This rejection is respectfully traversed in that the proposed combination does not render the invention defined by independent claim 1, as it has now been amended, obvious to persons having ordinary skill in the art.

First off, Borke does not teach the use of panels that have upper and lower parallel sheets of plastic separated by parallel ribs where only the upper sheet has a plurality of linear cuts that run from the one side edge of the upper sheet to the opposite side edge of the upper sheet to thereby produce a fold line in the lower sheet between the same adjacent pair of ribs between which the cut is made in the upper sheet. Moreover, claim 1 requires that, in placing the several panels defined between the fold lines into an operable configuration, that the panels be folded in one direction only. In Borke the fold at hinge 36 is in a direction opposite to the fold made at 28, and, hence, differs from what is claimed.

Further, claim 1, as now amended, calls for a "securing means for releasably securing the lip panel at an intermediate position between said lower front edge and upper rear edge of said working surface panel whereby all of said panels are held in the operative configuration". In the Borke embodiments, the panel 38 which may be equated to applicant's "lip panel" is not located at

an intermediate position between edge 22 and panel 28, but instead is located directly proximate the front edge 22.

With respect to the Amatangelo reference, it should be noted that this device is a container or box obtained by performing multidirectional cuts (40 and 42) in one of the sheets 14. Some of these cuts must of necessity be across, rather than between, the webs 18. This is contrary to applicant's device according to claim 1, in which all cuts are in the same direction, i.e., parallel to the ribs. Some cuts in the formation of Amatangelo's box are through the ribs and not between them. Thus, following the teachings of the cited reference would weaken the structural integrity of applicant's panels or would prevent them from being folded flat for storage and erected into a ramp-like configuration when in use.

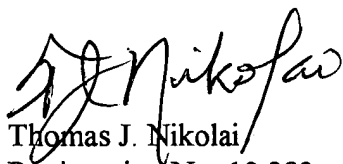
On the issue of obviousness *vel non*, the Examiner may take judicial notice of the fact corrugated cardboard sheets have been around for a 100 years or more, yet, apparently, no one has thought to create support device from that type of material by cutting through an upper sheet between corrugated ribs to create fold lines in the manner described and claimed by applicant thereby creating an inclined support structure for reading materials, bingo cards and the like. Admittedly, boxes, like what is described in Amatangelo, have been fabricated from corrugated cardboard. However, it apparently was not obvious to use a similar approach in fabricating a support device having an inclined working surface panel for supporting papers or, by now, there should have been a single reference teaching of such a construction.

For the reasons advanced, it is submitted that claim 1, as amended, defines an invention that is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by the cited art. Accordingly, it should be found allowable. In that claims 2-15 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, those dependent claims should also now be allowed.

By way of conclusion, then, appropriate amendments have been made to obviate the objections to the claims based upon 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The claims, as amended, define an invention that is new, useful and non-obvious. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

NIKOLAI & MERSEREAU, P.A.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "TJ Nikolai", is written over the printed name.

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that the foregoing Amendment in response to the Official Action of January 2, 2003, in application Serial No. 09/847,480 of inventor, Suzan Hardy, filed May 2, 2001, for "SUPPORT DEVICE" is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: MAIL STOP Non-Fee Amendments, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on April 2, 2003.